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ABSTRACT

The Smart Investment 2002 Public Opinion Survey measures public opinion about the importance and effectiveness of college programs, interest in possible future participation in colleges classes, satisfaction with information received from other colleges, and other topics. The survey was conducted on the phone and used 1,190 adult Washington residents from seven geographic regions. The sample has a margin of error of +/- 2.9%. Areas of investigation include community awareness and usage, college priorities, college performance, funding and tuition report, public information, and demographics. Key findings included the following: (1) 70% of Washington residents are familiar with community colleges and 67% of these residents rate the quality of education in these schools as good or excellent; (2) the top concern for colleges is job training; (3) two year colleges should be accessible and affordable for students; (4) the college's highest area of effectiveness is their geographic convenience; (5) colleges need to reduce dependence on welfare and reduce illiteracy among adults; (6) Running Start is the most highly regarded program offered by the colleges; and (7) there is a significant gap between the importance the public places on affordability and their perception of how affordable colleges are. Survey is appended. (Contains 22 tables.) (MZ)

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Smart Investment 2002 Public Opinion Survey: Highlights & Key Findings

[and]

Statewide Community Perception Analysis, 2002 Summary Report

Lorna Sutton

Jennifer K. Purcell

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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A Smart Investment
WASHINGTON COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGES

Smart Investment 2002 Public Opinion Survey

Highlights & Key Findings

September 2002

The latest statewide survey of adult Washington residents indicates:

- 70 percent of Washington state residents are familiar with community and technical colleges, and 67 percent of these residents rate the quality of education as good or excellent.
- Job skills training continues to be the top priority for the colleges. This was also the top priority in surveys conducted in 1994 and 1998.
- Two-year colleges should be both affordable and accessible. Access and affordability issues are ranked second, third and fourth in importance.
- There is a significant gap between the importance the public places on affordability and their perception of how affordable the colleges are.
- The colleges' highest area of effectiveness is their geographic accessibility.
- Colleges are rated lowest in reducing dependence on welfare and reducing illiteracy among adults.
- Running Start is the most highly regarded program offered by the colleges.

Overview

Washington residents give the community and technical colleges high ratings for quality, importance and relevance. They place the highest value on job training and want two-year colleges to be affordable and accessible. The colleges are recognized for their essential roles in economic development and addressing social concerns. In fact, all of the areas addressed by the colleges are important to a sizeable majority of residents.

Along with the good news, the survey points out some vital areas where respondents perceive improvements are needed to meet their expectations. People were asked to rate the importance of key educational, economic and social issues and then to indicate how effective the colleges are in the various

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areas. The resulting "gap analysis" shows that performance still lags importance by several points in almost every area. The largest gaps are in reducing dependence on welfare, offering affordable tuition and reducing illiteracy.

Among the key findings:

- **People who know the two-year colleges are pleased with their quality.** 70 percent of Washington residents are familiar with community and technical colleges, and these people give the colleges high ratings for quality. This level of "familiarity" has remained relatively steady over the years. In the 1998 survey, 73 percent of respondents said they were familiar with the colleges; in both 1990 and 1994, 71 percent said they were familiar with the colleges.

- When asked to rate the overall quality of education, **67 percent of people familiar with the colleges say their quality is good or excellent**. This number continues to increase over time. In 1998, 63 percent rated quality above average; in 1994, 56 percent said quality was above average.

- Among the 30 percent who were unfamiliar with the colleges, only 34 percent rate overall quality as above average. However, 26 percent of this group reports that they don' t know enough about the quality of education to rate it. The group that doesn' t have enough information to rate the colleges has been growing. In 1994, it was 16 percent; in 1998, it was 20 percent.

College participation

- **51 percent of Washington residents report having attended a community or technical college in this state.** In 1998, 56 percent had attended a two-year college in Washington. In both 2002 and 1998, 39 percent said that a household member other than themselves had taken a class.

- **Job skills training, listed by 38 percent, is the number one reason for attending community and technical colleges classes.** Other primary reasons are academic transfer (34 percent) and personal enrichment (27 percent). These were also the top reasons in 1994 and 1998.

- However, reasons for attending vary by age. Younger students, ages 18 to 29, are most likely to attend for academic transfer courses (44 percent). Students age 50 and older attend for job skills training (42 percent) and personal enrichment (33 percent), which represents a significant shift for this age group. In 1998, those age 50 and older were equally likely to attend for job skills training and personal enrichment (40 percent each).

- **Similar to years past, convenience of location and affordability, each cited by 33 percent, remain the most influential reasons for choosing a community or technical college** over any other institution. The specific field of study offered is third at 11 percent.

Importance: College priorities

Poll respondents were asked to rate the importance of addressing 13 different educational, economic and social issues at community and technical colleges.

- **Washington residents rate job skills training as the top priority for two-year colleges.** Helping students learn job skills is described as important by 90 percent of survey participants, making it the highest ranking issue addressed by two-year colleges, just as it was in 1994 and 1998.

- **Offering affordable tuition** (88 percent) and **providing greater access to higher education for Washington residents** (86 percent) are rated as second and third most important. These were also the second and third priorities in 1994 and 1998.

- Another access issue – **providing education close to home or work** – is rated fourth. The importance of geographic access has continued to increase since 1994. Today, 85 percent of statewide residents consider this important, compared to only 79 percent in 1994 and 82 percent in 1998.

- The next two issues – worker retraining and transfer preparation – are each rated important by 83 percent of the state' s population.

- It is significant that **even the lower-rated issues are viewed as important by a sizeable majority of Washington adults**, indicating that the public strongly supports the colleges' role in all of these issues. The three issues with the lowest percentages are helping new immigrants learn English (69 percent), helping teenagers earn college credits while completing high school (66 percent), and increasing access through online courses (60 percent).

- **Rankings for the Running Start program have increased consistently from year to year.** In 1994, 56 percent rated helping teenagers earn college credits as important; in 1998, 60 percent said it was important. This year, 66 percent rate Running Start as important.

Effectiveness: College performance

Those who regarded individual educational, social and economic concerns as important were asked to rate how effective the colleges are in addressing those specific concerns.

- **Washington state residents consider the colleges' highest area of effectiveness to be their geographic accessibility**, with 72 percent rating the colleges as effective in this area.

- Running Start is the most highly regarded program, with 67 percent saying the colleges are effective in helping high school students earn college credits.

- Other areas where the colleges were ranked as effective by more than 60 percent of respondents were providing opportunities for a diverse population (65 percent), helping students learn skills for jobs (63 percent) and helping students prepare to transfer (62 percent).

- The lowest effectiveness ratings went to reducing dependence on welfare and reducing illiteracy among adults. Among those residents who consider each of these issues "important," only 28

percent feel the colleges are effectively decreasing Washington state residents' dependence upon welfare, and only 32 percent consider the colleges' impact on adult illiteracy effective.

Gaps between importance & performance

An analysis of the gaps between the average importance and average performance ratings for the educational, social and economic concerns shows that the performance ratings trail the importance ratings for 12 of the 13 items.

- **Among the largest gaps are in reducing dependence on welfare and reducing illiteracy.** 79 percent believe it' s important for two-year colleges to reduce dependence on welfare, while only 28 percent feel the colleges are effectively doing so. 78 percent say it' s important for the colleges to reduce illiteracy among adults, but only 32 percent think the colleges are effective at this.

- **The gap in affordability is sizeable.** 88 percent say it' s important for two-year colleges to offer affordable tuition, while only 52 percent feel the colleges are effectively doing so.

- Other areas with significant gaps are helping students learn job skills, retraining people who are unemployed and providing access to higher education for all.

- The areas with the largest gaps in 2002 – reducing dependence on welfare, affordability and reducing illiteracy – also had the largest gaps in the 1994 and 1998 surveys.

Funding & Tuition Support

- In response to the state' s shortage of healthcare professionals, 66 percent of Washington residents support additional funding to improve technology specific to the field, 61 percent are in favor of increasing enrollment in this field by offering additional classes (course sections), and 53 percent support expanding programming by offering new programs. Only 7 percent do not support additional funding for any of these options.

- 48 percent of residents say they support a bond issue to finance construction at community and technical colleges. This number is almost identical to 1998, when 46 percent supported this idea. In 1994, 42 percent favored a bond issue.

- Given the state' s budget crisis and its impact on higher education, 36 percent of Washington residents say they support a tax increase specifically for offsetting the costs of higher education and 29 percent are in favor of increasing student tuition. Only 8 percent support limiting the number of students who can enroll and 14 percent would limit the number of programs offered.

Future participation

Survey participants in 2002 were asked a new series of questions about possible future participation in community and technical college classes.

- **52 percent of Washington state residents are "likely" to take a course at a community or technical college in the future.** Those most likely to attend are residents under the age of 50 with children under the age of 18 at home.

- Of those residents who may attend a community or technical college class in the future, **64 percent say time constraints are keeping them from taking classes now.**

- Potential students are interested in new program options: 48 percent of potential students say they are interested in the availability of online classes, 45 percent of potential students would consider an intensive course curriculum (offered in a time period shorter than a traditional quarter, for example), and 43 percent are interested in weekend classes.

Technology

- A majority of residents – 65 percent – agree that the latest technology is available to students at community and technical colleges. This is a significant increase over 1998, when less than half (48 percent) believed students had access to the latest technology.

Information sources & availability

- **The quarterly class schedule remains residents' primary source of information about community and technical college programs**, with 61 percent mentioning it. This was also the top-rated source in 1994 (67 percent) and 1998 (57 percent).

- Newspapers and college publications other than class schedules are declining significantly as sources of information about college programs. Newspapers were cited as a source by 20 percent in 1994, 24 percent in 1998 and only 18 percent in 2002. Printed materials such as brochures and newsletters were cited a source by 23 percent in 1994, 28 percent in 1998 and only 13 percent in 2002.

- Another big decline was in television as a source of information about college programs. Television was cited by 5 percent in 1994, it climbed to 10 percent in 1998 and went back to 5 percent in 2002.

- **The Internet appears to be picking up the slack from other media as 12 percent cited it as an information source in 2002.** In 1998, only 2 percent or residents identified the Internet as a source of information about the colleges.

- Similar to years past, most Washington state residents (72 percent) feel they are receiving just enough information from the colleges.

- The number of residents who say they do not receive enough information – 21 percent – has declined significantly since 1998 (26 percent).

- The respondents most likely to say they don' t receive enough information are those who are younger (ages 18-29), have children under age 18 at home, have little or no college experience, are not registered to vote, or have annual incomes below $35,000.

Survey background & methodology

Conducted by Market Research Services of Bellevue for the Smart Investment Committee, the survey measures public opinion about the importance and effectiveness of college programs, interest in future participation in college classes, support for funding to provide programs and facilities, satisfaction with information received from the colleges and other issues. Results are also compared with the findings of similar surveys conducted in 1998 and 1994 and, where applicable, with the 1990 survey which formed the basis for the system' s initial Smart Investment campaign.

A total of 1,190 adult Washington residents were interviewed by telephone from May 30 through June 18, 2002, to determine their familiarity with and attitudes toward the state' s 34 community and technical colleges. To ensure that the survey sample accurately reflects the population distribution and demographic characteristics of the state' s adult population, 170 people were interviewed in each of seven geographic regions.

The overall sample size of 1,190 yields a statewide reliability of plus-or-minus 2.9 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. This means the results have a 95 percent chance of coming within 2.9 percent of the results that would have been achieved if all Washington state residents had been surveyed. The regional sample size of 170 yields a reliability of plus-or-minus 7.5 percent with a 95 percent confidence level for each of the geographic regions.

Prepared by Lorna Sutton
SBCTC – 09/4/2002

SMART INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Trustees Association for the Community and Technical Colleges

STATEWIDE COMMUNITY PERCEPTION ANALYSIS 2002

SUMMARY REPORT

JULY, 2002

PREPARED FOR:

SMART INVESTMENT COMMITTEE
TRUSTEES ASSOC. OF COMM. & TECH. COLLEGES
319 Seventh Avenue, P.O. Box 42495
Olympia, Washington 98504-2495
Contact: Ms. Lorna Sutton, Director of Communications

PREPARED BY:

JENNIFER K. PURCELL
MARKET RESEARCH SERVICES
4121 W. Lake Sammamish Pkwy. S.E.
Bellevue, Washington 98008
Contact: Ms. Jennifer Purcell, Project Principal

DOCUMENT PREPARED BY:
JENNIFER K. PURCELL, MARKET RESEARCH SERVICES

Any questions or comments concerning this document may be directed to:

JENNIFER K. PURCELL
MARKET RESEARCH SERVICES
Jennifer K. Purcell, Project Principal
4121 W. Lake Sammamish Pkwy. S.E.
Bellevue, Washington 98008
Ph. 425-643-5001

DATA PREPARED BY:
MARKET TRENDS RESEARCH, INC.

Jackie Weise, Executive Vice President
Sabrina Panos Lee, Project Manager
Market Trends Research, Inc.
375 Corporate Drive South, Suite 100

Seattle, Washington 98188
Ph. 206-575-1222

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I. INTRODUCTION

Project Background

Jennifer K. Purcell, Market Research Services, operating as principal project manager, coordinated all phases of the research process. The research process was conducted to assist the SMART Investment Committee in better understanding residents' opinions of, and perceptions towards, the community and technical colleges of Washington state. In order to track public opinion over time, this study was designed to replicate similar studies conducted in 1994 and 1998.

Areas of Investigation

In order to meet the Committee's overall research objective, the following major areas of investigation were put to use:

I. Community Awareness & Usage
This section introduces respondents' familiarity with community and technical colleges and presents their household's experiences with higher education, as well as the factors influencing their institution choices.

II. College Priorities
This section looks at constituents' propensity to attend community or technical college classes in the future and examines their program needs, as well as evaluates the importance of addressing a variety of specific social and economic concerns.

III. College Performance
This section explores respondents' perceptions of the overall quality of education provided by Washington state community and technical colleges, as well as presents their impressions of the colleges' technology. This section also examines the colleges' effectiveness in meeting social and economic needs, identifying "gaps" between community importance and college performance ratings.

III. Funding & Tuition Support
This section evaluates constituents' support for a tuition increase, a bond issue, and funding for Running Start and healthcare programs.

V. Public Information
This section identifies how respondents hear about programs offered by Washington state community and technical colleges and examines how satisfied respondents are with the amount and type of information they are currently receiving.

VI. Demographics
This section looks at significant demographic trends impacting the community and technical colleges of Washington state.

Methodology

To accomplish these major objectives, the following research process was implemented:

For the purpose of quantifying constituents' opinions and perceptions, a quantitative telephone survey was employed to collect data from a statistically

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significant sampling of Washington state residents. A total of 1,190 Washington state residents were interviewed by telephone between May 30 and June 18, 2002. To ensure the survey sample was representative of the entire state's population, quotas were established by region: 170 interviews were completed among residents of each of seven regions (see *Geographic Distribution* below). All telephone surveys were conducted by Market Trends Research, Inc., Seattle, Washington. Market Trends then processed and tabulated the data, providing it to Jennifer Purcell for analysis.

Project specifications:

?? **Sample Size**
One thousand one hundred ninety (1,190) computer-assisted telephone interviews were completed among adults across the state of Washington. A total sample size of 1,190 will yield a margin of error of +/- 2.9% at the 95% confidence level, based on an estimated statewide population of 5.9 million. The regional sample size of 170 will yield a margin of error of +/- 7.5% at the 95% confidence level.

?? **Sample Source**
Market Trends Research, Inc. purchased random sample sufficient to conduct 170 surveys in each of seven regions established to ensure the telephone sampling is representative of the entire state's population. Genesys, Inc. prepared a computer-generated random digit-dialing (RDD) sample of statewide telephone numbers for the study.

?? **Questionnaire**
In collaboration with the SMART Investment Committee's survey development team, Jennifer K. Purcell designed, tested and finalized the survey instrument. In all possible instances the survey instrument was designed to replicate that of the 1998 and 1994 surveys. The final survey consisted of 60 questions, including 3 open ends (questions without coded responses). The average length of the survey was 14 minutes, 13 seconds, resulting in a final production rate of 1.48 completed interviews per hour.

?? **Geographic Distribution**
Quotas were established by region to ensure the sample is representative of the entire state's population. The thirty-nine Washington state counties were organized into regions based on geographic location, population size, as well as by which community and/or technical college the county is served. One hundred seventy (170) surveys were conducted in each of the seven regions. The regions are as follows:

I. Eastern-most Washington: Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Garfield, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, and Whitman counties
II. Central Washington: Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Franklin, Grant, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan, and Yakima counties
III. Olympic Peninsula: Clallam, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Kitsap, Mason, Pacific, and Thurston counties

IV. Southwestern Washington: Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis, Skamania, and Wahkiakum counties
V. Northwestern Washington: Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom counties
VI. Pierce County
VII. King County

These regional groupings were established for survey purposes in 1994 and remained unchanged in 1998 and 2002.

?? **Weighted Data**

Because the geographic distribution of Washington state's population has shifted significantly over the past four years, the 2002 survey data was weighted to better represent the overall opinions of state residents.

In 1994, when the regions were developed for survey purposes, the seven regions' populations were relatively equal with the exception of King County. In 1998 the geographic distribution of the state's population had not shifted significantly to alter the representation of the survey sample. In 2002, however, the population's shift was so significant in several counties that the survey sample did not adequately represent certain regions. Consequently, the 2002 data was weighted to more appropriately represent each region's percentage of the statewide population.

Washington's statewide population (according to the most recent data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau) is 5,894,000. The most current data reports the regional populations as follows:

I. Eastern-most Washington: 625,000; 10.6%
II. Central Washington: 680,000; 11.5%
III. Olympic Peninsula: 666,000; 11.3%
IV. Southwestern Washington: 521,000; 8.8%
V. Northwestern Washington: 961,000; 16.3%
VI. Pierce County: 701,000; 11.9%
VII. King County: 1,737,000; 29.5%

In weighting the 2002 survey data, the 170 completed interviews in each region are "weighted" to represent that region's actual percentage of the state's population. For example, the same number of interviews were completed in Northwestern Washington as in Southwestern Washington, however Northwestern Washington's surveys will represent 16.3% of responses after weighting, compared to Southwestern Washington's 8.8%.

Note: Reported findings that reference 2002 data are weighted, while 1998 and 1994 data are unweighted.

This report summarizes the key findings of the research process.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND USAGE

?? Washington state residents remain highly "familiar" with the community and technical colleges, with seventy percent of constituents alleging familiarity.

?? Northwestern Washington, Southwestern Washington, and Pierce County residents are significantly less "familiar" with the colleges than other residents of the state. While Northwestern Washington residents expressed a lower level of familiarity in 1998, Southwestern Washington and Pierce County residents familiarity with the community and technical colleges has declined significantly since then.

?? Fifty-one percent of Washington state residents report having taken a class at a community or technical college in Washington state. Additionally, thirty-nine percent say that a household member other than themselves has taken a class.

?? "Job skills training", "academic transfer", and "personal enrichment" remain the principal reasons for attending community and technical college classes.

?? Interestingly, the reasons for attending classes in Central Washington have shifted significantly since 1998. Students in Central Washington are most likely to attend classes for academic transfer preparation than any other reason.

?? The reasons for attending community and technical college classes vary by age. The youngest adult Washington students (18-29 years of age) are most likely to attend for the purpose of transferring to a four-year college or university, middle-aged residents (30-49 years of age) are equally likely to pursue job skills training and academic transfer, while students age fifty and older are most likely to attend for job skills training and personal enrichment.

?? Similar to years past, convenience of location and affordability remain the most influential reasons for choosing a community or technical college over any other institution.

?? Regionally, community and technical college students express different influences. Residents in Central and Southwestern Washington are significantly more influenced by geographic access, while Eastern Washington, Pierce County, and King County residents are primarily influenced by affordability.

II. COLLEGE PRIORITIES

?? Fifty-two percent of Washington state residents are "likely" to take a course at a community or technical college in the future.

?? Those most likely to attend are residents under the age of fifty with children under the age of eighteen at home.

?? Of those residents who will possibly attend a community or technical college class in the future, sixty-four percent say that time constraints are keeping them from taking classes now.

?? Interestingly, seventeen percent of potential students say they are not currently taking classes because there are no programs or classes of interest available.

Significantly, potential Central Washington students are more likely than others statewide to say their local community and technical colleges have no programs of interest.

?? It is important to note that twenty-six percent of those residents who say they are "somewhat *un*likely" to attend community or technical college classes in the future say they do not currently take classes because there are none of interest.

?? Potential students are interested in new program options. Forty-eight percent of potential students say they are interested in the availability of on-line classes, forty-five percent of potential students would consider an intensive course curriculum, and forty-three percent are interested in weekend classes.

?? Job skills training continues to be residents' top priority for the community and technical colleges of Washington state. Ninety percent of Washington state residents consider job skills training an "important" priority for the colleges. Similarly important to the state's job market, worker retraining is considered "important" by eighty-three percent of the state's population.

?? Accessibility is also a critical concern for Washington state residents; financial, academic, and geographic access to higher education for all who aspire. Eighty-eight percent of residents say it is "important" for the colleges to offer affordable tuition, another eighty-six percent say providing access to higher education is "important", and eighty-four percent say they look to the state's community and technical colleges to provide education close to their home or work.

?? Significantly, Northwestern Washington residents are more concerned with access to higher education than all other state residents.

?? Particularly interesting, the importance of geographic access has continued to increase since 1994. Today, eighty-five percent of statewide residents consider it "important" for the colleges to provide access to education close to their home or work, compared to only seventy-nine percent in 1994.

?? Job skills related programming is closely followed by transfer preparation in importance. Eighty-three percent of residents say it is "important" for the community and technical colleges of Washington state to help students prepare to transfer to a four-year college or university.

?? Support for the Running Start program has continued to increase since 1994. While only sixty-six percent of residents consider it "important" for the colleges to help teenagers earn college credits while completing high school, support has risen significantly from fifty-seven percent in 1994.

III. COLLEGE PERFORMANCE

?? Those who consider themselves "familiar" with the community and technical colleges of Washington state are significantly more impressed with the overall quality of education provided than their "unfamiliar" counterparts. Sixty-seven percent of those who are "familiar" say the education is "good" or "excellent", compared to only thirty-four percent of "unfamiliar" residents. Those who are "unfamiliar", however, are not less impressed, but uninformed, with twenty-six percent saying they "don't know" enough about the quality of education to rate it.

?? Impressions of the quality of technology available at the community and technical colleges have improved significantly since 1998. In 1998, less than half of Washington state residents agreed that the latest computer technology was available at the colleges, compared to sixty-five percent today. Curiously,

however, the number of residents likely to take a computer course has decreased from sixty-five percent in 1998 to fifty-eight percent today.

?? Washington state residents consider the colleges' highest area of effectiveness to be their geographic accessibility. Northwestern Washington residents, however, are significantly less impressed with the geographic accessibility of the community and technical colleges.

?? Community endorsement of the Running Start program continues to impress. Receiving one of the highest performance ratings, Running Start emerges as the most highly regarded community and technical college program. Along with support for the program, residents' impressions of its effectiveness are also on the rise. In 1994, only fifty-five percent of residents who considered the program "important" also considered it "effective", compared to sixty-seven percent today.

?? Of particular concern are the effectiveness ratings for the social concerns of reducing dependence on welfare and reducing illiteracy among adults. Among those residents who consider each of these issues "important", only twenty-eight percent feel the colleges are effectively impacting Washington state residents' dependence upon welfare, and only thirty-two percent consider the colleges' impact on adult illiteracy "effective".

IV. FUNDING & TUITION SUPPORT

?? Given the state's budget crisis and its affects on higher education, thirty-six percent of Washington residents "support" an increase in taxes specifically for offsetting the costs of higher education and twenty-nine percent are in favor of increasing student tuition. Options such as limiting the number of programs and limiting enrollment were less favored.

?? Forty-eight percent of residents "support" a bond issue for the purpose of funding building construction. Particularly of interest given Northwestern Washington's significantly lower impression of the colleges' geographic access, residents of Northwestern Washington are significantly more supportive of a bond issue than other residents with only seventeen percent opposing the notion.

?? Seventy-three percent of Washington state residents "support" Running Start, up from sixty percent in 1994. Significantly, households with school age children are more supportive of the program than those without children in the home.

?? Given the state's shortage of healthcare professionals, sixty-six percent of Washington residents support additional funding for the improvement of technology specific to the field, another sixty-one percent are in favor of increasing enrollment in this field by offering additional classes, while residents are least supportive of expanding programming by introducing new programs.

V. PUBLIC INFORMATION

?? The quarterly course catalog remains residents' primary source of information about community and technical college programs, with sixty-one percent mentioning it.

?? The newspaper and other college publications are declining significantly as sources of information about college programs. The Internet appears to be picking up the slack in these two media, jumping significantly from being an information source for only two percent of residents in 1998 to twelve percent today.

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?? Similar to years past, Washington state residents largely feel they are receiving just enough information from the colleges. The number of residents who say they do not receive enough information has declined significantly since 1998.

?? When asked what additional information they would like to receive from the colleges, Washington state residents overwhelmingly report there is no more information needed. Today, seventy-three percent do not request additional information, up significantly from sixty-three percent in 1998.

?? Residents appear more trustworthy of community and technical college decision making. Since 1994, residents' requests for more college visibility and accountability regarding resource allocation have essentially been eliminated.

VI. DEMOGRAPHICS

?? Washington state's population is aging, with the number of residents between the ages of thirty and fifty decreasing significantly since 1998. Conversely, the number of residents age seventy and older has increased significantly. Given the age groups' differing program interest, the community and technical colleges of Washington state will have to carefully balance resources to continue meeting the needs of a diverse population.

?? U.S. Census Bureau data reveal an unusual increase in the population of Northwestern Washington. San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom counties have all experienced more rapid population growth than the state average. Clark county has also experienced significant population growth. The colleges serving these communities face both the opportunity of an increase in demand, as well as the potential conflict of meeting that demand with limited supply.

III. KEY FINDINGS

The following are the key findings of the study by major area of investigation.

I. COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND USAGE

This section introduces respondents' familiarity with community and technical colleges and presents their household's experiences with higher education, as well as the factors influencing their institution choices.

Familiarity with community and technical colleges

Q.1 How familiar are you with community and technical colleges? Would you say you are... (READ LIST)	Percent (N=1190)
Very familiar	20
Somewhat familiar	50
Somewhat unfamiliar	14
Not at all familiar	16

Comments:

Seventy percent of Washington state residents (70%) consider themselves "familiar" with community and technical colleges. While residents' level of familiarity with the colleges has not changed significantly since 1998, it remains remarkable that the community and technical colleges enjoy such a significant acquaintance with their constituents.

Northwestern Washington residents (Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom counties) continue to relate lower levels of familiarity with the colleges than others in Washington state (63%, 75%). While Northwestern Washington residents' current level of familiarity is consistent with the 1998 findings, Southwestern Washington (Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis, Skamania, and Wahkiakum counties; 64%) and Pierce County residents (63%) join them as significantly less familiar with community and technical colleges than others in the state (75%). Both of these regions' residents reported a significantly higher sense of familiarity in 1998, with seventy-seven percent of residents saying they were "familiar" with the colleges.

In each of these regions, greater than one third of residents say they are "unfamiliar" with the community and technical colleges. It is important for these regions to consider why their constituents are less familiar than others in the state. Interestingly, attendance at community and technical colleges (see *Community Awareness & Usage*) and satisfaction with the amount of information received from the colleges (see *Public Information*) do not appear to directly affect these different levels of familiarity, with no significant regional differences revealed.

It is important to report a significantly lower level of familiarity among two key target groups: those residents who report a household income of less than $50,000 (66%, n=561) and those residents who indicate receiving no education past the high school or GED level (50%, n=288). These individuals are less familiar with community and technical college programs and opportunities than their counterparts.

Those residents with a household income of less than $50,000 (66%) are significantly less "familiar" than their higher income counterparts (74%). While residents earning less than $35,000 were significantly less "familiar" in 1998, the significance of income and its pronounced relationship to familiarity appears to be more conspicuous in 2002. Importantly, thirty percent of residents with a household income of less than $35,000 (30%) say they do not receive enough information from their local community and technical colleges (see *Public Information*), suggesting that the colleges can be making a better effort to communicate with this sizable segment of the state's population.

Only fifty percent of less educated individuals (50%) suggest they are "familiar" with the community and technical colleges, compared to seventy-seven percent of those with at least some college experience (77%). While these potential students may be less interested in education, it is important to note that twenty-seven percent of these residents (27%) say they do not receive enough information from their local community and technical colleges (see *Public Information*). This significant difference also existed in 1998. The colleges should look closely at more effectively communicating with these individuals.

Lastly, the community and technical colleges continue to enjoy a significantly high level of voter familiarity (72%, compare to 60% of non-voters). Increased familiarity with the colleges translates to higher opinions of college programs (see *College Performance*). High voter familiarity benefits the colleges through increased perceptions and support.

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Community and/or technical college experience

Q.3 Have you ever attended classes at a community or technical college in Washington state? Q.7 Has any member of your household, other than yourself, attended classes at a community or technical college in Washington state?	Percent (N=1190)
Respondent attended comm./tech. college	51
Household member attended comm./tech. college	39

Q.5 For what reason(s) did you attend the class(es)? Q.9 For what reason(s) did they attend the class(es)? (DO NOT READ LIST; MULTIPLE RESPONSES ALLOWED)	Percent
Respondent (n=607)	
Job skills training	38
Academic training/transfer	34
Personal enrichment	27
Basic skills training	9
High school completion	3
English as a second language	1
Household member (n=444)	
Academic training/transfer	46
Job skills training	36
Personal enrichment	15
Basic skills training	8
High school completion	6
English as a second language	1

Comments:

Slightly greater than half of Washington state residents (51%) report having taken a class at a community or technical college in Washington state. In addition, thirty-nine percent of residents (39%) say that a household member other than themselves has taken a class at a community or technical college in Washington state. The community and technical colleges enjoy a high level of experience among their constituents. This may, in part, contribute to the significant familiarity with the colleges.

"Job skills training" (38% respondent, 36% household member), "academic transfer" (34%, 46%), and "personal enrichment" (27%, 15%) remain the principal reasons for attending community and technical college classes. These college curriculum priorities have not changed significantly since 1998.

Interestingly, however, the reasons for attending community and technical college classes in Central Washington (Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Franklin, Grant, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan, and Yakima counties) have shifted significantly. Central Washington residents (47%) are significantly more likely than other Washington state

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residents (32%) to attend community or technical colleges for the purpose of academic transfer. In Central Washington, academic transfer (47%) significantly exceeds all other programming, with only thirty percent of students (30%) taking classes for job skills training. This is a significant change since 1998 when all regions reflected the similar program participation.

Age and educational background continue to play significant roles in students' reasons for attending classes at community and technical colleges. Younger students, ages 18 to 29 years of age, are most likely to attend community and technical college classes for the purpose of transferring to a four-year college or university (44%), which is significantly more likely than their older counterparts (32%). Students age fifty and older are most likely to attend for job skills training (42%) and personal enrichment (33%), both of which are significantly more likely than their younger counterparts (35%, 22% respectively). Interestingly, it appears that since 1998 the typical job skills training student has aged. In 1998 there was no correlation between age and the pursuit of job skills training, no one age group was significantly more likely than the others to attend these types of classes. However, as the state's population ages (see *Demographics*), those seeking to update their job skills have aged as well.

Interestingly, in 1998 educational background significantly impacted students' reasons for attending classes a community and technical colleges. In 2002, educational background does not appear to significantly affect their needs from the colleges, with the exception of academic transfer programming. It is understandable that those students with no education past the high school level are significantly less likely to attend classes for academic transfer than their more educated counterparts.

Recognizing potential students' academic tendencies based on these general indicators will help the colleges target their marketing materials accordingly. For instance, the colleges in Central Washington appear to have a prominent academic transfer following. And community and technical colleges across the state can direct program information to the appropriate age group, given their interests.

Four-year college or university experience

Q.6 Have you attended a four-year college or university? Q.10 Has any member of your household, other than yourself, attended a four-year college or university?	Percent (N=1190)
Respondent attended 4-year college/univ.	49
Household member attended 4-year college/univ.	48

Comments:

Questions 6 and 10 were reworded for the 2002 survey. In past surveys, respondents were asked about attendance of four-year colleges or universities *in Washington state*. For the 2002 survey, respondents were only asked about their attendance of *any* four-year college or university. Nearly half of Washington state residents (49%) have attended a four-year college or university. Similarly, forty-eight percent of residents (48%) currently report that a member of their household attended a four-year college or university. While these numbers are significantly higher than the four-year college and university usage reported in 1998 928%, 28%), we broadened the field by including institutions outside of Washington state.

True to its reputation for a highly educated populace, King county residents (65% respondents, 58% household members) are significantly more likely than other Washington state residents (42%, 44%) to have attended a four-year college or university. Conversely, Southwestern Washington residents (34% respondents, 37% household members) continue to report fewer four-year college graduates than other regions (50%, 49%). Southwestern Washington's attendance of four-year institutions was also significantly lower than their statewide counterparts in 1998.

Interestingly, while residents' educational background does not appear to effect their household's choices regarding community and technical college classes (see *Community Awareness & Usage*), educational background does impact their choices regarding four-year institutions. Those residents who have at least a four-year degree (67%, n=435) are significantly more likely than their less educated counterparts (37%) to have a household member who attended a four-year college or university. It is understandable that household members place similar value on education and share educational objectives. It is, however, curious that the same rule does not appear to apply to the community and technical colleges of Washington state.

Factors influencing decision making

Q.11 What one reason most influenced your decision to go to a ***community or technical college*** rather than another institution?	Percent (n=603)
Location/proximity/close to home	33
Cost/affordability	33
Specific field of study offered	11
Flexible scheduling/classes held at convenient times	3
Job skill enhancement	3
Academic accessibility	3

Q.12 What one reason most influenced your decision to go to a ***four-year college or university*** rather than another institution?	Percent (n=574)
To obtain a 4-year/bachelor's degree	37
Specific field of study offered	11
Job opportunities/earning potential	9
Location	8
Quality of education	6
It was expected/never considered anything else	6
Scholarship/grant/other cost related reasons	6

Comments:

Similar to years past, convenience of location (33%) and affordability (33%) remain the most influential reasons for attending a community or technical college. Washington state residents also attend community and technical colleges seeking a specific field of study (11%).

It is important to note several significant regional differences regarding residents' reasons for attending community and technical colleges. Residents in Central and Southwestern Washington (60%, 53%) are significantly more influenced by location and geographic access than other Washington students (26%). While in Eastern Washington (36%), Pierce County (35%), and King County (40%), residents are primarily influenced by cost and affordability, with location coming in second (23%, 27%, 21% respectively). These regional differences effect how the colleges are communicating with their constituents. Each region's potential student population will respond to different messages about the accessibility of the community and technical colleges.

Most Washington state residents who have attended a four-year college or university say they do so because they wanted to obtain a four-year degree (37%, n=574). Others say they choose university over another institution in order to study a specific field (11%) or because of the job opportunities and earning potential for four-year graduates (9%).

While these primary reasons for attending a four-year college or university have not changed significantly since 1998, interestingly residents' perceptions of a superior

quality of education (6% in 2002, 9% in 1998) and the prestige/reputation (3%, 7%) of the four-year institution have decreased significantly over the past four years. It appears that the four-year college/university's reputation of superiority over other higher education institutions may be waning.

II. COLLEGE PRIORITIES

This section looks at constituents' propensity to attend community or technical college classes in the future and examines their program needs, as well as evaluates the importance of addressing a variety of specific social and economic concerns.

Likelihood of taking classes in the future

Q.A How likely is it that you will take a course at a community or technical college in the future? Would you say it is...	Percent (N=1190)
Very likely	25
Somewhat likely	27
Somewhat unlikely	18
Very unlikely	30

Program needs

Q.B Which of the following, if any, would you say currently prevents you from taking classes at a community or technical college?	Percent (n=827)
Not having enough time	63
Financial considerations	31
No programs/classes of interest	17
Availability of child care	14
Location of the campus	11
None of these currently prevents me from taking classes	11

Q.C Which of the following, if any, would be of interest if you were considering taking a class at a community or technical college?	Percent (n=827)
On-line courses	48
Intensive courses in which class time is condensed	45
Weekend courses	43
Courses above freshman/sophomore level	32
None of these would be of interest to me	10

Comments:

Slightly greater than half of Washington state residents (52%) are "likely" to take a course at a community or technical college in the future. Those most likely to attend are residents under the age of fifty (61% "likely" to attend), with children under the age of eighteen at home (64% "likely").

Familiarity with the community and technical colleges breeds a likelihood of attendance. Those who are "familiar" with the colleges (56%) are significantly more likely to attend classes in the future than their "unfamiliar" counterparts (42%). Similarly, those who have attended community or technical college classes in the past

(63%) are significantly more likely to say they will do so again than those who have not attended (40%). It speaks highly of the quality of experience with the community and technical colleges when past experience is indicative of future attendance.

Significantly, of those residents who will possibly attend a community or technical college course in the future, nearly two-thirds (64%, n=827) say that time constraints are keeping them from taking classes now. Additionally, financial restrictions affect thirty-one percent of residents (31%) desiring to take classes in the future. Other conveniences that restrict residents' attendance of college classes include child care concerns (14%) and the location of the campus (11%).

Those who are limited by time are most likely between the ages of 30 and 49 (70%) and living in King County (73%). Those who are limited by financial considerations are most likely younger (48%) and living in more rural regions of Washington (34%). Also significantly limited by not having enough time are the community and technical colleges' potential students. Sixty-six percent of those "likely" to attend classes in the future (66%) say they are limited by time, significantly more than those not likely to take classes in the future (56%).

Interestingly, seventeen percent of potential students (17%) say there are no programs or classes of interest. Significantly, potential Central Washington students (28%) are significantly more likely than other state residents (15%) to say their local community and technical colleges have no programs of interest. Given Central Washington residents propensity to attend community and technical college classes for the primary purpose of academic transfer (see *Community Usage & Awareness*), it is possible that awareness of other college programs is limited. The community and technical colleges serving the Central region (Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Franklin, Grant, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan, and Yakima counties) are faced with the challenge of communicating classes and programs of interest to this significant group of potential students.

Significantly, twenty-six percent of those who say they are "somewhat *un*likely" to take a community or technical college course in the future (26%) admit that there are no program or classes of interest. It would be beneficial for the colleges to further pursue their constituents' programming needs, ensuring there is not an educational need being overlooked.

Overall, another eleven percent (11%) say that none of these choices currently prevents them from taking classes at a community or technical college.

Potential students (n=827) are particularly interested in the availability of on-line courses. Nearly half of those Washington residents who are likely to attend classes in the future (48%) say that on-line courses would be of interest to them. The option of taking classes when it is convenient for the student is understandable given their time restrictions (64%), responsibility for dependents (14%), and impressions of inconvenient campus locations (11%).

Additionally, forty-five percent of potential students (45%) are intrigued by the option of intensive courses. Again, given their time restrictions, these residents are interested in the opportunity to complete course work in a concentrated period of time. Another forty-three percent (43%) are interested in weekend courses which offer the opportunity to work around other commitments.

Nearly two-thirds of those who are likely to attend community or technical college classes in the future (32%) express an interest in courses above a freshman/sophomore level. Significantly, only ten percent (10%) of potential students say they are not interested in any of these options.

Importantly, Washington residents who say they are "somewhat *un*likely" to attend community or technical college classes in the future (n=209) say they are interested in on-line courses (44%), weekend courses (42%), intensive courses (36%), and courses above the freshman/sophomore level (28%). Only fifteen percent of the "somewhat *un*likely" students (15%) say they are not interested in any of these program options.

Importance of social and economic concerns

Q.14 Using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being Not At All Important and 5 being Very Important, how important do you feel it is that Washington state community and technical colleges address each of these concerns?	Percent "Important" (n=varies)	Average (mean) Importance Rating	1998
Helping students to learn skills for jobs	90	4.6	92/4.6
Offering affordable tuition	88	4.5	89/4.6
Providing access to higher education for all	86	4.4	84/4.4
Providing education close to home or work	84	4.4	82/4.3
Retraining people who are unemployed	83	4.3	81/4.3
Helping students prepare to transfer	83	4.3	79/4.3
Helping adults achieve high school diplomas	80	4.3	76/4.2
Reducing dependence on welfare	79	4.3	81/4.4
Reducing illiteracy among adults	78	4.3	81/4.3
Providing opportunities for a diverse population	77	4.2	67/4.0
Helping new immigrants learn English	69	4.0	65/3.9
Helping h.s. teenagers earn college credits	66	3.9	60/3.7
Increasing access through on-line courses	66	3.9	79/4.3

Comments:

The community and technical colleges of Washington state have identified a list of thirteen specific economic and social concerns facing their system. When residents are asked to rate the importance of each of these concerns, they consider all to be "important" priorities for the community and technical colleges. Of particular significance, these importance ratings reveal a commonality between the priorities of the community and technical colleges of Washington state and the people they serve.

Job skills training continues to be residents' top priority for the community and technical colleges of Washington state. Ninety percent of Washington state residents (90%) indicate that it is "important" for the community and technical colleges to help students learn job skills. And, overall, it is considered the most important of the colleges' concerns. Similarly important to state residents' employability, impacted by economic conditions, worker retraining is considered "important" by eighty-three percent of the state's population (83%). Importantly, Northwestern Washington residents (96%) are significantly more likely than other Washington state residents (89%) to consider job skills training "important". The colleges serving this growing region including Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom counties (see *Demographics*) must be particularly attentive to their constituents' priorities for their programming.

Also significant is the importance of job skills training among those who are likely to take community or technical college classes in the future. These future students (93% "important") consider job skills training a significantly more important concern for the community and technical colleges of Washington state than those who say they are not likely to take future classes (87%). Similarly, these same future students (86% "important") are significantly more concerned with worker retraining programs than those residents not planning future course work (80%). Washington

state's future community and technical college students place high priority on keeping human resources employable.

Accessibility is also a critical concern for Washington state residents. They look to the community and technical colleges to provide financial, academic, and geographic access to higher education for all who aspire. Eighty-eight percent of residents (88%) say it is "important" for the colleges to offer affordable tuition, another eighty-six percent (86%) say providing access to higher education is "important", and eighty-four percent (84%) say they look to the state's community and technical colleges to provide education close to their home or work.

Interestingly, Northwestern Washington residents (92% "important") consider access to higher education significantly more "important" than all other Washington state residents (85%). Considering the varied aspects of accessibility, it is important for the colleges serving Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom counties to better understand why this is of such importance to their constituents. Recalling Northwestern Washington's lower level of familiarity with the community and technical colleges of Washington state (63% "familiar"; see *Community Usage & Awareness*), it is critical for the colleges serving the state's fastest growing communities (see *Demographics*) to evaluate their communications efforts.

Of particular interest, the importance of providing access to education close to home or work has continued to increase since 1994. As the residents of Washington state grow increasingly busy and stretched for time, it is increasingly important to be able to access higher education in a convenient location. In 1994, seventy-nine percent of residents (79%) considered it "important" that the colleges provide access to education close to home or work, in 1998 eighty-two percent (82%) said this was an important concern, eighty-five percent of today's constituents (85%) say this is "important" for the community and technical colleges of Washington state to concern themselves with. Overall, average importance for geographic accessibility has increased from 4.2 on a five-point scale in 1994 to 4.4 in 2002.

Transfer preparation is considered the colleges' second highest academic priority. Eighty-three percent of residents (83%) consider it "important" that the community and technical colleges of Washington state help students prepare to transfer to a four-year college or university. Giving consideration to the aspects of accessibility discussed earlier in this section, the colleges' academic transfer program provides many young students the critical foundation necessary to access university level education. Interestingly, the state's registered voters (84% "important") place a significantly higher priority on transfer preparation than non-voters (75% "important"). Voters may consider this option an important investment of the state's higher education resources.

High school completion/GED and English as a second language programs are considered less "important" when reflecting upon the multitude of needs being met by the community and technical colleges of Washington state. However, given the importance of access to higher education for all, Washington residents look to the community and technical colleges to fill these needs as well. Eighty percent (80%) consider it "important" that the colleges help adults achieve high school completion, with another sixty-nine percent (69%) feel the colleges must offer help for new immigrants to learn to speak and write English. While these programs are considered

less critical than others, it is important to recognize that a majority of constituents see them as "important" programs offered by the colleges.

Interestingly, support for the Running Start program has continued to increase since 1994. In 1994, only fifty-seven percent of state resident (57%) rated the program "important", in 1998 that support increased to sixty-one percent (61%), compared to sixty-six percent of today's constituents (66%) who say that it is "important" that the colleges help teenagers earn college credits while completing high school. On average, statewide support for the Running Start program has increased from 3.6 on a five-point scale in 1994 to 3.9 in 2002. This speaks highly of the perceived value of the Running Start program. Constituents are likely developing a greater awareness of its success. Interestingly, however, as the rest of the state's support for the Running Start program continues to increase (68% important), King County residents (59% "important") continue to express limited support for the program.

Residents most supportive of Running Start are under the age of thirty (75% "important"), report a household income of less than $50,000 (74% "important"), or have less than a four-year degree (71% "important"). These residents consider Running Start significantly more "important" than residents age thirty and older (64%), with a household income of at least $50,000 (59%), or with a four-year degree (57%). These supporters likely see a higher value in investing in high school students at an earlier age rather than allowing them to progress at a typical academic pace. Their counterparts likely see academic acceleration as a waste of resources. These demographic criteria are important to the colleges as they communicate the value of this investment.

While it is not the highest of priorities, on-line courses do contribute to the accessibility of higher education, and sixty-six percent of Washington residents (66%) consider it "important" for the community and technical colleges. Interestingly, those residents "likely" to take a class at a community or technical college in the future (69% "important") are significantly more intrigued by the idea of accessing education through on-line courses than those not inclined to take classes in the future (62%). Given their time constraints (see *College Priorities*), on-line courses provide opportunity to participate in higher education at the student's convenience.

III. COLLEGE PERFORMANCE

This section explores respondents' perceptions of the overall quality of education provided by Washington state community and technical colleges, as well as presents their impressions of the colleges' technology. This section also examines the colleges' effectiveness in meeting social and economic needs, identifying "gaps" between community importance and college performance ratings.

Perceptions of the overall quality of education

Q.2a Please rate the overall quality of education provided by community and technical colleges... Q.2b Please rate your perceptions of the overall quality of education provided by community and technical colleges using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being Poor and 5 being Excellent.	Overall (n=1186)	Percent "Familiar" (n=834)	Percent "Unfamiliar" (n=352)
Excellent	13	16	6
Good	44	51	28
Neutral	26	22	33
Fair	4	3	6
Poor	1	1	1
Don't know	13	7	26
Average (mean) performance rating	3.3	3.8	3.4

Comments:

Overall, fifty-seven percent of Washington state residents (57%) consider the quality of education provided by the community and technical colleges to be "good" or "excellent". Importantly, thirteen percent of residents (13%) say they do not know enough about the colleges to make a judgment about the colleges' performance.

Significantly, those who consider themselves "familiar" with the community and technical colleges of Washington state are more impressed with the overall quality of education than their "unfamiliar" counterparts. Those who are familiar are significantly more likely to rate the quality as "good" or "excellent" than their unfamiliar counterparts (67%, 34% respectively). Those who are unfamiliar, however, are not necessarily less impressed with the quality of education as much as they are simply unfamiliar. Those residents who are unfamiliar with the colleges are significantly more likely to say they "don't know" about the quality of education provided by community and technical colleges than their familiar counterparts (26%, 7% respectively).

Importantly, among those who are "familiar" with the colleges (n=834), older residents are significantly more impressed by the college than their younger counterparts. Residents age fifty and above are most impressed, with seventy-three percent (73%) rating the quality of education as "good" or "excellent". Only sixty-four percent of residents between the ages of thirty and forty-nine (64%) rated the colleges as such, and an even lesser fifty-eight percent of residents between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine (58%) consider the education provided by the community and technical colleges of Washington state to be "good" or "excellent".

While age does not appear to indicate familiarity or likelihood of attending classes at a community or technical college, interestingly, age does effect students' reasons for attending classes at community or technical colleges in Washington state (see *Community Usage & Awareness*). The state's oldest residents, age fifty and above, are most likely to have taken classes for job skills training (42%) and/or personal enrichment (33%), while residents between the ages of thirty and forty-nine most frequently attended classes for job skills training (37%) and/or academic transfer (37%), and the youngest segment, ages eighteen to twenty-nine, have most often taken classes for academic transfer (44%). It could be that these experiences are impacting residents' impressions of the quality of education provided by the community and technical colleges of Washington state.

Quality of technology

Q.16 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please use a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being Strongly Disagree and 5 being Strongly Agree.	Percent
a. Computers and the latest technology are available to students at community and technical colleges.	(n=1189)
Agree	65
Neutral	19
Disagree	5
Don't know	12
Average (mean) rating	4.1
d. I would take a course at my local community or technical college to expand my computer skills.	(n=1186)
Agree	57
Neutral	18
Disagree	23
Don't know	2
Average (mean) rating	3.6

Comments:

Washington state residents perceptions of the quality of technology offered by community and technical colleges is favorable. Nearly two-thirds of Washington residents (65%) "agree" that the latest technology is available to community and technical college students. Additionally, fifty-seven percent of residents (57%) are confident in the quality of technology courses, saying they would take a course at their local community or technical college to expand their computer skills.

It is important to note that King County residents are significantly less familiar with the quality of technology available at the colleges than other Washington state residents. Only fifty-six percent of King County residents (56%) say they "agree" that the latest technology is available to community and technical college students, compared to sixty-eight percent of other statewide residents (68%). However, this does not indicate negative impressions as much as an unfamiliarity, with sixteen percent of King County residents (16%) saying they do not know about the technology available, compared to only nine percent of other residents (9%). While this did not equally translate into a significantly reduced likelihood of taking computer courses in the future, the King County colleges may want to consider increasing its service area's awareness of the system's investment in technology.

Impressions of the computers and technology available at the community and technical colleges have improved significantly since 1998. In 1998, less than half of Washington state residents (48%) agreed that the latest computer technology was available at the colleges, compared to sixty-five percent (65%) today. Curiously,

however, the number of residents likely to take a computer course has decreased. In 1998, sixty-five percent of residents (65%) said they would take a course at their local community or technical college to expand their computer skills. This compares as a significant loss to today's fifty-eight percent (58%) who are likely to take a computer course. This may simply be indicative of a more computer savvy constituency in 2002.

Effectiveness in meeting social and economic concerns

Q.15 Using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being Not At All Effective and 5 being Very Effective, how effectively do you feel Washington state community and technical colleges are addressing each of these concerns?	Average (mean) Importance Rating	Average (mean) Performance Rating	Percent "Effective" (n=varies)	1998
Helping students to learn skills for jobs	4.6	3.9	63	66/4.0
Offering affordable tuition	4.5	3.6	52	56/3.7
Providing access to higher education for all	4.4	3.8	57	64/3.9
Providing education close to home or work	4.4	4.1	72	73/4.1
Retraining people who are unemployed	4.3	3.6	45	49/3.7
Helping students prepare to transfer	4.3	4.0	62	64/4.0
Helping adults achieve high school diplomas	4.3	3.9	56	62/4.1
Reducing dependence on welfare	4.3	3.1	28	34/3.3
Reducing illiteracy among adults	4.3	3.4	32	39/3.6
Providing opportunities for a diverse population	4.2	4.0	65	60/4.0
Helping new immigrants learn English	4.0	3.7	42	42/3.7
Helping h.s. teenagers earn college credits	3.9	4.1	67	62/4.0
Increasing access through on-line courses	3.9	3.6	44	59/3.8

Comments:

The community and technical colleges of Washington state appear to be most closely meeting residents' expectations regarding geographic accessibility, academic transfer and English as a second language programs, student diversity, and technology-based learning.

Washington state residents consider the colleges' highest area of effectiveness to be their geographic access. Seventy-two percent of residents who are "familiar" with the colleges *and* consider it "important" that community and technical colleges provide access to education close to home or work (72%, n=707) say the college is effectively meeting their accessibility needs. Northwestern Washington residents, however, are significantly less impressed with the geographic accessibility of their community and technical colleges. Only sixty-two percent of Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom county residents (62%) say the colleges' geographic accessibility is effective, compared to seventy-four percent of their statewide counterparts (74%). Considering the remoteness of much of this region, it is understandable that the colleges are perceived as less accessible, however this region is experiencing unusual population growth (see *Demographics*) and it would be wise for the community and technical colleges of Northwestern Washington to consider how they might better serve their constituents in this way.

Community endorsement of the Running Start program continues to impress. Receiving one of the highest performance ratings (4.1 on a five-point effectiveness scale), sixty-seven percent of residents who are "familiar" with the colleges *and* consider the program "important" rate Running Start as "effective" (67%, n=534). Running Start emerges as the most highly regarded community and technical college program. Other programs rated in this exercise are not as highly regarded among their supporters: job skills training ("63% "effective", n=744), academic transfer (62% "effective";

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n=680), high school completion/GED (56% "effective", n=650), and ESL (42% "effective", n=552).

Along with support for the Running Start program (see *College Priorities*), impressions of the program have improved significantly in the eyes of constituents since 1994. In 1994, only fifty-five percent of residents who supported the Running Start program considered it "effective" (55%). In 1998 that percentage jumped to sixty-two percent (62%), and today sixty-seven percent of residents who consider Running Start "important" (67%) say the program is "effective". It is important to recognize that the colleges appear to be meeting the expectations of this program's growing support system.

Of particular concern are the effectiveness ratings for the social concerns of reducing dependence on welfare and reducing illiteracy among adults. Among those residents who are familiar with the colleges *and* consider each of these issues "important", only twenty-eight percent feel the colleges are effectively impacting Washington state residents' dependence upon welfare (28%, n=648), and only thirty-two percent consider the colleges' impact on adult illiteracy "effective" (32%, n=627). This presents an incredible opportunity for the community and technical colleges of Washington state! The colleges must communicate more effectively with their constituents about the social impact community and technical colleges are making. Student success stories are one great way of developing a connection between these societal concerns and the colleges in the minds of Washington state residents.

IV. FUNDING & TUITION SUPPORT

This section evaluates constituents' support for a tuition increase, a bond issue, and funding for Running Start and healthcare programs.

Support for tuition options

Q.18 Community and technical college tuition for the 2002-2003 school year will be about $1,980 for a full-time student. This reflects an increase of about $400 since 1999. Anticipating the state's budget crisis will continue, which one of the following would you most support?	Percent (n=1187)
Increase taxes for higher education	36
Increase student tuition	29
Limit the number of programs	14
Limit the number of students who can enroll	8
None of the above	8
Don't know	5

Comments:

Given the state's budget crisis and its affects on higher education, most Washington state residents support an increase in taxes specifically for offsetting the costs of higher education (36%). Another large group of residents is in favor of increasing student tuition (29%). A smaller segment of the population says that community and technical colleges should limit the number of programs (14%) or restrict the number of students who can enroll (8%).

Interestingly, King County residents are significantly less supportive of limiting the number of programs offered by the state's community and technical colleges (7%) than their other statewide constituents (18%). They are, conversely, more likely to support none of these budget options (12%) than all other state residents (7%).

Also of significance, residents of Southwestern Washington (23%) and Pierce County (29%) are less likely to support an increase in taxes than their other statewide neighbors (38%). These regions' residents are more likely to support higher student tuition (33%) than a tax increase (27%).

Support for bond issue

Q.20 Using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being Strongly Oppose and 5 being Strongly Support, to what extent would you support or oppose a bond issue specifically for the purpose of funding building construction for community and technical colleges?	Percent (n=1187)
Strongly support	25
Somewhat support	23
Neutral	26
Somewhat oppose	8
Strongly oppose	14
Don't know	4

Comments:

Nearly half of Washington state residents (48%) support a bond issue for the purpose of funding building construction for community and technical colleges. While another twenty-two percent (22%) oppose the notion, thirty percent of constituents (30%) remain undecided.

Particularly of interest, given Northwestern Washington's significantly lower impression of the colleges' geographic access (see *College Performance*), those same residents of Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom counties are significantly more likely than their statewide counterparts to support a bond issue for funding building construction. Greater than half of Northwestern Washington residents (57%) say they would "support" such a bond issue, compared to forty-seven percent of other Washington residents (47%). Only seventeen percent of Northwestern Washington residents (17%) say they "oppose" the notion.

Support for Running Start

Q.17 Washington state community and technical colleges currently offer a program called Running Start... To what extent do you support or oppose such a program? Please use a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being Strongly Oppose and 5 being Strongly Support.	Percent (N=1190)
Strongly support	54
Somewhat support	19
Neutral	17
Somewhat oppose	6
Strongly oppose	3
Don't know	1

Comments:

A significant majority of Washington state residents (73%) support the community and technical colleges' Running Start program. While only nine percent (9%) oppose the program, eighteen percent of constituents (18%) remain undecided.

As evidenced earlier in this report (see *College Priorities* and *College Performance*), support for Running Start has increased significantly since 1998, and even more notably since 1994. In 1994, sixty percent of residents (60%) expressed their support for Running Start programs. In 1998, support increased to sixty-nine percent (69%), and in 2002 we see nearly three-fourths of Washington residents (73%) supporting the program. Both opposing and neutral votes have decreased significantly.

Households with school age children are significantly more supportive of Running Start than those without children in the home. Seventy-eight percent of residents with children under eighteen (78%) say they "support" Running Start, compared to sixty-nine percent of those without young children (69%). Increased support among eligible households speaks highly of the quality of the program and its reputation.

Support for healthcare program funding

Q.19 Washington state is currently experiencing a shortage of healthcare professionals. Community and technical colleges currently have waiting lists for programs in many of these fields. For which of the following, if any, would you support additional funding? (MULTIPLE RESPONSES ALLOWED)	Percent (N=1190)
Improving program-specific technology and making more current technology available	66
Increasing enrollment by offering additional classes	61
Expanding programming by introducing new programs and course offerings	53
Would not support additional funding for any of these	7

Comments:

Two-thirds of Washington residents (66%) support improving technology specific to the field of healthcare. In addition, sixty-one percent (61%) are in favor of increasing enrollment in this field by offering additional classes. Residents are also supportive of expanding programming by introducing new programs, with slightly greater than half (53%) saying they would support funding for such investment. Only seven percent of Washington state residents (7%) say they would not support funding for the improvements and/or expansion of healthcare programming.

Interestingly, younger Washington state residents between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine are significantly more supportive of the improvements. Only one percent of this age group (1%) indicate they would not support any additional funding for healthcare programming, compared to eight percent of residents age thirty and older (8%). Also, these same younger Washington adults' support for expansion, specifically the introduction of new programs and course offerings, is significantly higher than their older counterparts. Sixty-seven percent of eighteen to twenty-nine year olds (67%) would support additional funding for new programs, compared to fifty-one percent of the state's thirty and older population (51%). These potential students are likely interested in the highly employable environment of the healthcare industry. The community and technical colleges offer them access to employable job skills as potential healthcare professionals. In an unsteady economic environment, Washington's young people are particularly interested in careers that offer a high potential for employability.

V. PUBLIC INFORMATION

This section identifies how respondents hear about programs offered by Washington state community and technical colleges and examines how satisfied respondents are with the amount and type of information they are currently receiving.

Information Sources

Q.21 How do you find out about programs offered by your local community and technical colleges?	Percent (n=1188)
Class schedule/booklet in mail	61
Newspaper	16
Other publications such as newsletters, flyers	13
Internet	12
Go to the college/call college/counselor	11
Word of mouth	9
Television	5
Bulletins/notices at work	3
Radio	2
Library/Community center	2
Attending special events on campus	1
WorkSource Center/Unemployment office	1

Comments:

The quarterly course catalog (61%) remains residents' primary source of information about community and technical college programs. While the newspaper (16%) and other publications such as newsletters and flyers (13%) are additional sources of information, their prevalence has declined significantly since 1998 (24%, 28% respectively). The Internet appears to be picking up the slack in these two media, jumping significantly from being an information source for only two percent of residents (2%) in 1998 to twelve percent (12%) in 2002.

The course catalog is a critical tool of communication for the community and technical colleges. Those who are "familiar" with the colleges (64%) are significantly more likely to site the catalog as an information source than those "unfamiliar" with the colleges (55%). Additionally, those who have attended community or technical college classes in the past (68%) mention the catalog as an information source more often than non-students (54%). And, most significantly, of potential students, those residents who say they are "likely" to attend a community or technical college class in the future, sixty-six percent (66%) say they consult the quarterly course catalog, compared to only fifty-six percent of those "unlikely" to take classes in the future (56%). The quarterly course catalog received in the mail is an immeasurable asset to community and technical college communications.

Interestingly, King County residents (70%) are significantly more likely than other state residents (58%) to find out about community and technical college programs through the quarterly course catalog. Also of significance, sixty-four percent of registered voters (64%) learn about the college through the course catalog, compared to only forty-eight percent of non-voters (48%), while non-voters (20%)

are significantly more likely to access information on the Internet than their voting counterparts (11%).

Others inclined toward the Internet as a source for program information are the youngest of Washington's adult population, eighteen to twenty-nine year olds. Significantly, the Internet is this younger segment's second-most mentioned source of information, with twenty-eight percent of eighteen to twenty-nine year olds (28%) learning about the colleges' programs in cyberspace. Older residents are significantly more inclined towards the course catalog and newspaper as information sources. Sixty-four percent of the thirty plus population (64%) uses the course catalog as their primary source of program information, while an additional twenty-two percent of the fifty plus age group (22%) rely on the newspaper.

It was revealed earlier in this report that fifty percent of Washington state residents with no formal schooling beyond high school (50%) say they are " unfamiliar" with the community and technical colleges of Washington state (see *Community Usage & Awareness*). Interestingly, only forty-seven percent of these same residents (47%) say they receive program information from a quarterly catalog, compared to sixty-six percent of residents with at least some college experience (66%). Significantly, twenty percent of these less educated residents (20%) receive information about college programs through the newspaper. Given their limited familiarity with the community and technical colleges of Washington state, it appears the colleges are not effectively communicating with these potential students.

Several respondents say they go to the college or contact college personnel (11%) for information about college programs. And another nine percent (9%) say they rely on word of mouth. Interestingly, word of mouth has declined significantly as a means of influence since 1998 when more than double the respondents (19%) indicated it as a significant informant.

Other media such as television (5%) and radio (2%) have some influence, while significantly less than that in 1998 (10%, 4% respectively). These media are also likely being replaced by the Internet. Another notable difference involves the attendance of special events on campus, with only one percent of respondents (1%) indicating that they receive program information this way compared to five percent (5%) in 1998. A new resource emerged in 2002, with one percent of residents (1%) specifying the WorkSource Center or unemployment office as an important source of information regarding community and technical college programs.

Amount of information received

Q.22 Do you feel your local community and technical colleges provide you with... (READ LIST)	Percent (n=1185)
Too much information regarding college programs,	4
Just enough information, or	72
Not enough information?	20

Additional information requested

Q.23 What additional information, if any, would you like to receive from your local community and technical colleges?	Percent (n=1184)
None/Nothing more	73
More detailed information about classes	4
General course schedule/what is offered and when	4
Cost/tuition information	2
Information on tuition assistance	2
Information on programs/degrees offered	2

Comments:

Similar to years past, Washington state residents (72%) largely feel they are receiving just enough information. While there remains a small throng (20%) who say they do not receive enough information from the colleges, this is down significantly from 1998 (26%).

It is noteworthy that the youngest Washington adults, least affluent, and least educated are most likely to say they are not receiving enough information from the colleges. Thirty-two percent of eighteen to twenty-nine year olds (32%), thirty percent of residents with a household income of less than $35,000 (30%), and twenty-five percent of residents with only some college level experience (25%) say they do not receive enough information from their local community and technical colleges compared to their respective counterparts (18%, 30+ year olds; 18%, $35,000+ household income; 11%, four-year college graduates).

When asked what additional information Washington state residents would like to receive, they overwhelmingly report there is no more information needed (73%). This is up significantly from 1998 when only sixty-three percent of residents (63%) said there was nothing additional they would like to receive from the colleges. This significant increase may indicate that the colleges are doing a better job of communicating with their constituents. It might also, however, be indicative of the times we live in with information at consumers' fingertips via the Internet. Residents are no longer reliant upon the colleges to provide the needed program information.

Those residents who request information are interested in learning more about the classes offered. Four percent (4%) want more detailed course descriptions, another four percent (4%) say they simply want a class schedule, and another two percent (2%) want information about the programs and degrees offered at the colleges. Residents also request cost and tuition information (2%) and details about the

availability of tuition assistance (2%). Given that thirty-one percent of potential students (31%, n=821; see *College Priorities*) relate that financial restraints are currently keeping them from taking classes, providing direction for tuition information is reasonable.

It is interesting to note that the number of residents desiring additional course and tuition information has declined significantly since 1998. In 1998, seven percent (7%) requested general course information compared to four percent (4%) in 2002, and six percent (6%) wished for tuition information compare to only two percent (2%) today.

One intriguing suggestion that was new in 2002 was for the colleges to provide information about the job market. A small group of respondents (1%) would like to see information about the demand for people in particular fields, earning potential, job placement statistics, for instance. The is interesting given the economic environment today. This might be particularly relevant to programs in fields such as healthcare, where supply is not meeting demand.

It is also interesting to note the decline in requests for the colleges to be more visible. Since 1994, residents desire for increased media exposure and publicly available information has decreased from three percent of residents (3%) to one percent (1%). Additionally, residents' requests for financial reports, budget information, and disclosure of college spending has decreased significantly. In 1994, two percent of residents (2%) requested information about how college funds were allocated, where in 1998 and today almost no requests of the like (0%) are made. It appears that Washington state residents' confidence in the colleges has increased. The trend suggests that constituents are more trustworthy of community and technical college decision making.

VI. DEMOGRAPHICS

This section looks at significant demographic trends impacting the community and technical colleges of Washington state.

Age Distribution

D.3 What is your age?	Percent (n=1180)
18 - 29	14
30 - 39	20
40 - 49	22
50 - 59	19
60 - 69	13
70 or over	12

Comments:

Washington state's population is aging. Since 1998, the number of residents between the ages of thirty and fifty has decreased significantly. In 1998, twenty-three percent of respondents (23%) were between the ages of thirty and forty, compared to twenty percent (20%) today; twenty-seven percent (27%) were between the ages of forty and fifty in 1998, compared to twenty-two percent (22%) today. Conversely, the number of residents age seventy and older has increased from eight percent (8%) in 1998 to twelve percent (12%) in 2002.

Given the age groups' differing program interests (see College *Usage & Awareness*), the community and technical colleges of Washington state will have to carefully balance resources to continue meeting the needs of a diverse population.

Geographic Distribution

Geographic region	Regional population (U.S. Census)	Percent of statewide population
Eastern-most Washington	625,000	10.6
Central Washington	680,000	11.5
Olympic Peninsula	666,000	11.3
Southwestern Washington	521,000	8.8
Northwestern Washington	961,000	16.3
Pierce County	701,000	11.9
King County	1,737,000	29.5
Statewide population	5,894,000	100.0

Comments:

U.S. Census Bureau data reveal a phenomenon of increasing population density in the Northwestern part of Washington state, reporting significant increases in San Juan (40%), Skagit (30%), Snohomish (30%), and Whatcom county (30%) populations. While the community and technical colleges serving this region are faced with an extraordinary opportunity, they may also potentially face a conflict between supply and demand.

Clark county (45%) has also experienced significant population growth according to U.S. Census data. While its growth did not impact the Southwestern region's representation as significantly as its Northwestern counterparts, it is important for the colleges serving Clark county to take note of similar potential opportunities and pitfalls.

V. GRAPHICAL SUMMARY

(see PowerPoint slides)

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made to The SMART Investment Committee and the Trustees Association of the Community and Technical Colleges by Jennifer K. Purcell, Market Research Services, based on:

- ?? Monitoring the actual interviews,
- ?? Detailed analysis of the data base reports,
- ?? Experience in interpreting the results of similar studies, and
- ?? Comparison of the data with 1994 and 1998 results.

Boost awareness in fastest growing regions.

The community and technical colleges serving the Northwestern and Southwestern regions of Washington state are faced with a unique opportunity. Specifically, U.S. Census Bureau data reveal an unusual increase in the population of San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom, and Clark counties. These Northwestern and Southwestern counties have all experienced more rapid population growth than the state average. These regions subsequently report significantly lower levels of public familiarity with the community and technical colleges of Washington state than all other residents.

While these residents attend community and technical colleges as often as all other Washington residents and they are as satisfied with the amount of college information they receive as others, their familiarity with the colleges falters. The community and technical colleges serving these communities must evaluate current communications strategies, finding ways to bolster increased awareness of the colleges and what they have to offer.

Increase communications aimed at less educated state residents.

Only fifty percent of residents who have not had the opportunity to complete any education past the high school level consider themselves "familiar" with the community and technical colleges of Washington state. While their attendance of the colleges is significantly less than other residents, it is most consequential that these less educated residents are more likely than their counterparts to say they are not receiving enough information regarding college programs.

The community and technical colleges of Washington provide the opportunity for education to many who would not otherwise be able to achieve such aspirations. A significant percentage of residents with no college experience say that financial restrictions are currently keeping them from attending classes at the community and technical colleges. The colleges need to better communicate their options regarding tuition assistance and the potential long term benefits of their investment.

Those less educated residents who have attended community or technical colleges classes most often attended for job skills training, personal enrichment, academic transfer, and high school completion. Additionally, college priorities that are significantly more important to these residents than other include high school completion, Running Start, reducing adult illiteracy. The community and technical colleges of Washington state have a responsibility to their less educated constituents to communicate the accessibility of higher education, focusing on programs that are important to them.

Identify aging population's educational needs.

Washington state's population is aging, with the average age increasing from 43.5 years of age in 1994 to today's average of 47.9 years of age. Survey data indicate that age significantly impacts students' reasons for attending community and technical college classes. Students age fifty and older are most likely to attend for job skills training and personal enrichment, while residents between the ages of thirty and forty-nine are equally as likely to attend for job skills training as academic transfer. Recognizing potential students' academic tendencies based on age will help the colleges balance resources to continue meeting the needs of a diverse population.

Recognize the colleges' role of providing affordable and accessible higher education for all without losing sight of the quality of education.

Accessibility is a critical concern for Washington state residents. They look to the community and technical colleges to provide financial, academic, and geographic access to higher education for all who aspire. Convenience of location and affordability remain the most influential reasons for attending a community or technical college rather than another institution. In addition, when asked to prioritize the colleges' concerns, Washington state residents say that it is most important that the community and technical colleges of Washington state provide access to higher education for all, offering affordable tuition and providing education conveniently located close to home or work.

Importantly, when potential students are asked what currently prevents them from taking classes, while most say they simply do not have enough time, many say financial considerations or the location of the campus is prohibitive. The colleges must communicate all aspects of accessibility. However, a difficult balance must be maintained between accessibility and overall quality of education. Washington state residents must believe it is possible to achieve both simultaneously.

Prioritize job skills training.

While the community and technical colleges of Washington state serve many diverse purposes, residents refer to job skills training as the most important objective. Ninety percent of residents consider job skills training an "important" function of the community and technical college system. Job skills training also remains one of the primary reasons for attending community or technical college classes, according to students. Worker retraining is also considered "important" by a vast majority of state residents. Constituents value the role of the community and technical colleges in the

state's workplace. While other programs are also seen as "important", job related training consistently emerges as the colleges' highest priority.

Implement social impact campaign.

While a majority of Washington residents consider it "important" that the community and technical colleges be involved with several social concerns, they are unable to make the connection with results. Residents consider it "important" for the colleges to provide retraining programs for unemployed workers, to help adults achieve high school diplomas, to reduce dependence on welfare, to reduce illiteracy among adults, and to help new immigrants learn the English language. However, their perceptions of how effectively the colleges are performing in each of these areas are not favorable. The colleges must communicate more effectively with their constituents about the social impact made by the community and technical colleges of Washington state. Student success stories are one way of developing a connection between social concerns and the colleges in the minds of Washington state residents.

Develop key system messages and focus local information efforts.

Washington state's community and technical college system benefits from delivering key messages that communicate statewide goals. Statewide messages provide a foundation for local marketing efforts, with individual college's communications complementing statewide activity. Residents' exposure to consistent college messages will increase their familiarity with the colleges and their programs. Survey data indicate that through increased familiarity the colleges will enjoy higher perceptions of quality as well as increased support.

Consider the quarterly course catalog a key communication tool, expanding its usefulness and complimenting it with other marketing efforts.

The quarterly course catalog continues to be the primary source of information about college programs. The catalog provides a vital link between the colleges and the communities they serve. Those who are "familiar" with the colleges and/or have attended community or technical college classes in the past are significantly more likely to site the catalog as an information source than "unfamiliar" residents who have not attended. In addition to increasing familiarity with the colleges, the quarterly catalog is also an important source of program information for potential students. Those residents who say they are "likely" to attend community or technical college classes the future are significantly more inclined to mention the course catalog as their source for information.

Considering the catalog's effectiveness, the colleges may consider expanding its usefulness. The quarterly mailing can be used to communicate far more than course offerings. It also provides a forum for presenting college goals, explaining the availability of tuition assistance, touting student success stories, and profiling college personnel. The catalog, in conjunction with other media, presents unlimited potential for simultaneously communicating accessibility and quality of education.

VII. APPENDICES

TELEPHONE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

STATEWIDE COMMUNITY PERCEPTION ANALYSIS

ENTER REGION (REFER TO SAMPLE):
(QUOTA: 170 COMPLETES/REGION; 50/50 M/F)

1 **EASTERN-MOST WASHINGTON**- Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Garfield, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, and Whitman counties
2 **CENTRAL WASHINGTON**- Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Franklin, Grant, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan, and Yakima counties
3 **OLYMPIC PENINSULA**- Clallam, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Kitsap, Mason, Pacific, and Thurston counties
4 **SOUTHWESTERN WASHINGTON** Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis, Skamania, and Wahkiakum counties
5 **NORTHWESTERN WASHINGTON** Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom counties
6 **PIERCE COUNTY**
7 **KING COUNTY**

Hello, this is _____ with Market Trends, a local market research company. We are conducting a survey of Washington state residents related to education and we would like to include your opinions. May I speak with a head of household?

(INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF ASKED, SPONSOR CAN BE REVEALED AT END OF SURVEY)

GENDER: (OBSERVATION ONLY - QUOTA: 50% MALE / 50% FEMALE)

1 Male
2 Female
3 Respondent not available **(GET CALLBACK TIME-DISPOSITION SCREEN)**

S.1 And, just to verify, are you over the age of 18?

1 Yes
2 No **(TERMINATE)**

S.2 Are you registered to vote in the state of Washington?

1 Yes
2 No
3 Don't know
4 Refused

Q.1 How familiar are you with community and technical colleges? Would you say you are... (READ LIST) (INTERVIEWER NOTE: FAMILIARITY WITH COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES IN GENERAL, NOT JUST WASHINGTON STATE)

1 Very familiar,
2 Somewhat familiar,
3 Somewhat unfamiliar, or **(SKIP TO Q.2b)**
4 Not at all familiar. **(SKIP TO Q.2b)**
5 (DON'T READ) Don't know **(TERMINATE)**
6 (DON'T READ) Refused **(TERMINATE)**

Q.2a Please rate the overall quality of education provided by community and technical colleges using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being Poor and 5 being Excellent.

1 Poor
2 Fair
3 Neutral
4 Good
5 Excellent
6 (DON'T READ) Don't know
7 (DON'T READ) Refused

GO TO Q.3

Q.2b Please rate your perception of the overall quality of education provided by community and technical colleges using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being Poor and 5 being Excellent.

1 Poor
2 Fair
3 Neutral
4 Good
5 Excellent
6 (DON'T READ) Don't know
7 (DON'T READ) Refused

Q.3 Have you ever attended classes at a community or technical college in Washington state?

1 Yes
2 No **(SKIP TO Q.7)**
3 Don't know **(SKIP TO Q.7)**
4 Refused **(SKIP TO Q.7)**

Q.4 Which community/technical college(s) offered the class(es) you attended? (DO NOT READ LIST -- MULTIPLE MENTIONS ALLOWED)

LIST
Don't know
Refused

Q.5 For what reason(s) did you attend the class(es)? (DO NOT READ LIST -- USE FOR CLARIFICATION PURPOSES; MULTIPLE MENTIONS ALLOWED)

1 Job skills training
2 Academic training/transfer to 4-year college/university
3 Basic skills training/reading, writing and math
4 Personal enrichment
5 High school completion/GED
6 English as a second language
7 OTHER: _____
8 Don't know
9 Refused

Q.7 Has any member of your household, *other than yourself*, attended classes at a community or technical college in Washington state?

1 Yes
2 No **(SKIP TO Q.11)**
3 Don't know **(SKIP TO Q.11)**
4 Refused **(SKIP TO Q.11)**

Q.8 Which community/technical college(s) offered the class(es) attended by that member of your household? (DO NOT READ LIST -- MULTIPLE MENTIONS ALLOWED)

LIST
Don't know
Refused

Q.9 For what reason(s) did they attend the class(es)? (DO NOT READ LIST -- USE FOR CLARIFICATION PURPOSES; MULTIPLE MENTIONS ALLOWED)

1 Job skills training
2 Academic training/transfer to 4-year college/university
3 Basic skills training/reading, writing and math
4 Personal enrichment
5 High school completion/GED
6 English as a second language
7 OTHER: _____
8 Don't know
9 Refused

Q.11 (IF "YES" TO Q.3) What ***one reason*** most influenced your decision to go to a community or technical college rather than another institution?

_____

Q.6 Have you attended a four-year college or university?

1 Yes
2 No
3 Don't know
4 Refused

Q.10 Has any member of your household, *other than yourself*, attended a four-year college or university?

1 Yes
2 No
3 Don't know
4 Refused

Q. 12 (IF "YES" TO Q.6) What ***one reason*** most influenced your decision to go to a four-year college or university rather than another institution?

_____

—

Q.14 I am now going to read a list of various economic and social concerns. Using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being Not At All Important and 5 being Very Important, how important do you feel it is that Washington state community and technical colleges address each of these concerns? (DP NOTE: ROTATE STATEMENTS A-M)

1 Not at all important
2 Somewhat unimportant
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat important
5 Very important
6 (DON'T READ) Don't know
7 (DON'T READ) Refused

a. Helping students prepare to transfer to a four-year college/university
b. Helping students learn skills for jobs
c. Retraining people who are unemployed
d. Helping adults achieve high school diplomas or GED certificates
e. Helping teenagers earn college credits while completing high school
f. Helping new immigrants learn to speak and write English
g. Reducing illiteracy among adults
h. Reducing dependence on welfare
i. Providing greater access to higher education for all residents
j. Providing educational opportunities for a diverse student population
k. Offering affordable tuition for Washington students
1. Providing access to education close to home or work
m. Increasing access to education through on-line courses

Q.15 Using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being Not At All Effective and 5 being Very Effective, how effectively do you feel Washington state community and technical colleges are addressing each of these concerns? (DPNOTE: RECALL IF RATED A "4" OR "5" IN Q.14 AND "1" OR "2" IN Q. 1)

1 Not at all effective
2 Somewhat ineffective
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat effective
5 Very effective
6 (DON'T READ) Don't know
7 (DON'T READ) Refused

a. Helping students prepare to transfer to a four-year college/university
b. Helping students learn skills for jobs
c. Retraining people who are unemployed
d. Helping adults achieve high school diplomas or GED certificates
e. Helping teenagers earn college credits while completing high school
f. Helping new immigrants learn to speak and write English
g. Reducing illiteracy among adults
h. Reducing dependence on welfare
i. Providing greater access to higher education for all residents
j. Providing educational opportunities for a diverse student population
k. Offering affordable tuition for Washington students
1. Providing access to education close to home or work
m. Increasing access to education through on-line courses

Q.16 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please use a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being Strongly Disagree and 5 being Strongly Agree.

1 Strongly disagree
2 Somewhat disagree
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat agree
5 Strongly agree
6 (DON'T READ) Don't know
7 (DON'T READ) Refused

a. Computers and the latest technology are available to students at community and technical colleges.
d. I would take a course at my local community or technical college to expand my computer skills.

Q.A How likely is it that you will take a course at a community or technical college in the future? Would you say it is...

1 Very Likely
2 Somewhat Likely
3 Somewhat Unlikely
4 Very Unlikely (SKIP Q.B and Q.C)

Q.B Which of the following, if any, would you say currently prevents you from taking classes at a community or technical college? (Rotate items - Multiple responses allowed)

PAUSE FOR YES/NO RESPONSE AFTER EACH ITEM

1 Availability of child care
2 Financial considerations
3 Not having enough time
4 Location of the campus
5 No programs/classes of interest
6 (DON'T READ) None of these currently prevents me from taking classes

Q.C Which of the following, if any, would be of interest if you were considering taking a class at a community or technical college? (Rotate items - Multiple responses allowed)

PAUSE FOR YES/NO RESPONSE AFTER EACH ITEM

1 Intensive courses in which the class time is condensed (For example, a class would meet every day for two weeks rather than meeting once a week for ten weeks.)
2 On-line courses
3 Weekend courses
4 Courses toward a bachelor's degree, above freshman/sophomore level
5 (DON'T READ) None of these would be of interest to me

Q.17 Washington state community and technical colleges currently offer a program called Running Start which allows teenagers to attend college and earn college credits while also completing their high school education. To what extent do you support or oppose such a program? Please use a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being Strongly Oppose and 5 being Strongly Support.

1 Strongly oppose
2 Somewhat oppose
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat support
5 Strongly support
6 (DON'T READ) Don't know
7 (DON'T READ) Refused

Q.18 Community and technical college tuition for the 2002-2003 school year will be about $1,980 for a full-time student. This reflects an increase of about $400 since 1999. Anticipating the state's budget crisis will continue, which ***one*** of the following would you most support? (Rotate items)

1 Increase taxes for higher education
2 Limit the number of students who can enroll
3 Limit the number of programs
4 Increase student tuition
5 (DON'T READ) None of the above
6 (DON'T READ) Don't know
7 (DON'T READ) Refused

Q.19 Washington state is currently experiencing a shortage of healthcare professionals. Community and technical colleges currently have waiting lists for programs in many of these fields, such as x-ray technology, dental assisting and nursing. For which of the following, if any, would you support additional funding? (Rotate items - Multiple responses allowed)

PAUSE FOR YES/NO RESPONSE AFTER EACH ITEM

1 Increasing enrollment by offering additional classes
2 Improving program-specific technology and making more current technology available
3 Expanding programming by introducing new programs and course offerings
4 (DON'T READ) Would not support additional funding for any of these

Q.20 Using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being Strongly Oppose and 5 being Strongly Support, to what extent would you support or oppose a bond issue specifically for the purpose of funding building construction, such as classrooms and labs, for community and technical colleges?

1 Strongly oppose
2 Somewhat oppose
3 Neutral
4 Somewhat support
5 Strongly support
6 (DON'T READ) Don't know
7 (DON'T READ) Refused

Q.21 How do you find out about programs offered by your local community and technical colleges? (DO NOT READ LIST – PROBE FOR MULTIPLE MENTIONS)

1 Internet
2 Television
3 Radio
4 Newspaper
5 Word of mouth
6 Class schedule/Booklet in mail/Quarterly catalog
7 Publications other than class schedule (flyers, newsletters, etc.)
8 Bulletins/Notices at work
9 Library/Community center
10 WorkSource Center/Unemployment office
11 Through attendance at special events on campus
12 Go to the college/Call college/counselor/Pickup or request information
13 OTHER: _____
14 OTHER: _____
15 Don't know
16 Refused

Q.22 Do you feel your local community and technical colleges provide you with... (READ LIST)

1 Too much information regarding college programs,
2 Just enough information, or
3 Not enough information.
4 (DON'T READ) Don't know
5 (DON'T READ) Refused

Q.23 What additional information, if any, would you like to receive from your local community and technical colleges?

1 None/Nothing more
2 SPECIFY:

_____

Now I have a few questions for classification purposes only...

D.2 What is the highest level of education that you've had the opportunity to complete? (DO NOT READ LIST)

1 Grade school (8 years or less)
2 Some high school (I - 3 years)
3 High school graduate/GED
4 Some college (including training schools)
5 Community or technical college degree/certificate
6 4-year college graduate
7 Graduate work
8 Don't know
9 Refused

D.3 What is your age? (INSERT EXACT NUMBER)

_____ (X = DON'T KNOW; Y = REFUSED)

D.5 How many people currently live in your household? (INSERT EXACT NUMBER)

_____ (X = DON'T KNOW; Y = REFUSED)

D.6 How many children under the age of 18 currently live in your household? (INSERT EXACT NUMBER)

_____ (X = DON'T KNOW; Y = REFUSED)

D.7 What is your county of residence?

1	Adams	11	Franklin	21	Lewis	31	Snohomish
2	Asotin	12	Garfield	22	Lincoln	32	Spokane
3	Benton	13	Grant	23	Mason	33	Stevens
4	Chelan	14	Grays Harbor	24	Okanogan	34	Thurston
5	Clallam	15	Island	25	Pacific	35	Wahkiakum
6	Clark	16	Jefferson	26	Pend Oreille	36	Walla Walla
7	Columbia	17	King	27	Pierce	37	Whatcom
8	Cowlitz	18	Kitsap	28	San Juan	38	Whitman
9	Douglas	19	Kittitas	29	Skagit	39	Yakima
10	Ferry	20	Klickitat	30	Skamania	40	Don't know
						41	Refused

D.8 What is your zip code? (INSERT EXACT NUMBER)

_____ (X = DON'T KNOW; Y = REFUSED)

D.10 Which of the following categories best describes your annual household income? (READ LIST)

1 Under $20,000,
2 at least $20,000 but less than $35,000,
3 at least $35,000 but less than $50,000,
4 at least $50,000 but less than $65,000,
5 $65,000 or more?
6 (DON'T READ) Don't know
7 (DON'T READ) Refused

So I can tell my supervisor I spoke with you, may I have your first name only? _____

And just to verify, did I dial... _____

Thank you for your opinions. Have a good (EVENING, AFTERNOON, ETC.)

(INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF ASKED, THIS SURVEY IS BEING CONDUCTED ON BEHALF OF THE TRUSTEES ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES)

DATE: _____

INTERVIEWER ID#: _____

DATABASE REPORT
and
VERBATIM REPORT
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